



Not WHO I Am

But WHAT I Stand For . . .

My Fellow Citizens:

In the newspapers of September 14, 1961, I made a formal announcement of my candidacy for the office of Mayor of our City. It was as follows:

"I am mindful, as I hope you are, WHO I AM is not important in the contest for the office of Mayor. WHAT I STAND FOR and WHAT I AM AGAINST are the important parts of my candidacy. They should be the important parts of every man's candidacy.

"For example, whether I was born here or elsewhere is of relatively small significance. (I was born here.) Whether I am married or single. (I am married.) Whether I do or do not have children. (I have three children.) Whether I attended the local schools. (I did attend the local schools.) These questions, and others like them, are, in my mind, matters of relatively minor importance.

"The important matters are WHERE I STAND, WHAT I STAND FOR, WHAT I INTEND TO DO AS A CANDIDATE, and WHAT I INTEND TO DO AS MAYOR, if elected. These are the matters of concern to all of us.

"The campaign should be an effort to raise the questions which confront our municipal government to their highest level, — to a level of clear and incisive discussion among the candidates and the citizens of our City. I want to do this. I want to discuss the issues affecting all of us who have a stake in our community.

"To date, this is no campaign. It's a patty-cake party. This is no campaign. It's the same, 'I know Jack — you know Joe — he knows Ed — she knows Frank — we know Nick.' The same old stuff. The same 'nice guy' business. The same 'who am I'. Never 'what does he stand for?'

"I want to lift this campaign off the ground. I want you to have something constructive to talk about and something definite to think about. I want you to be able to say, 'I'm voting for this fellow because he's for this or against that.' I don't want you to say, 'He's a nice guy.' (Some people say I'm a 'nice guy'.) But that's not enough, I've got to ask you, as another fellow once did. 'Since when do nice guys win ball games?'

"Ask the questions which affect the present and future of our City. Help me lift this campaign above the level of personalities. Help me take this campaign out of the house-party stage. Help me make this a campaign of 'what must be done for the people of our City' — 'what must be done to enable us as citizens to realize the full potential of the best and most progressive city on the North Shore.'

"If my fellow candidates and you, as citizens, help me cast the campaign in this mold, we shall be acting in the tradition of responsible members of our democratic family. I'm going to give you the reasons why you should or should not vote for me. I hope my fellow candidates do the same. Then, none of us can have any regrets after the election.

"Within a few days you will have in your homes my understanding of the issues in this campaign. You will have the reasons why I think as I do. You will know what I intend to do. They will represent my request for your confidence and your vote. Maybe, my thinking will give you reason or reasons to vote against me. If so, at least you will have something to think about.

"I'm happy and thankful to the editor to have this opportunity to announce formally my candidacy for the office of Mayor."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In substance, I said that I was going to discuss the issues which confront us as citizens. I'm as good as my word. I'm going to give you the reasons why you should or should not vote for me. I'm going to try to talk out loud and give you my reasons for thinking as I do. Then you can be the judge of whether I do or do not deserve your vote.

First, I think the major issues and problems of the 1961 political campaign are, or should be, clear. It's a case of where do we go from here. What do we do now? The past, in my opinion, is something to look back at for only one reason, and one purpose: to take from it the best and to leave the worst.

I'm neither a salesman by inclination or profession. I have only my reasoning, my conclusions, my personal integrity, and my hopes for the future of our good City to sell you. I know what I have learned about our City and its government in the last four years as a member of the City Council. I'm willing to discuss my opinions of the issues here, on the streets, on the public platform, on the radio, and — if I could afford it, — on television so that you could see me.

The major issues and problems of our community, as I see them, are divided into five parts as follows:

1. **WHAT DO WE, WHAT DOES PEABODY, DO TO REPLACE THE LEATHER INDUSTRY?**
2. **WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT THE J. B. THOMAS HOSPITAL?**
3. **WHAT DO WE DO TO IMPROVE OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM?**
4. **WHAT DO WE DO TO BRING ADEQUATE SEWER AND WATER FACILITIES TO ALL PARTS OF OUR CITY?**
5. **WHAT DO WE DO TO IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATION OF OUR CITY GOVERNMENT?**

I do not propose, and I do not intend to suggest, that the above are all of our problems. I do feel that their solution would go a long way towards making our City a better place in which to live.

Here are my thoughts and my answers and suggestions:

1. **WHAT DO WE, WHAT DOES PEABODY, DO TO REPLACE THE LEATHER INDUSTRY WHICH HAS BEEN DYING SLOWLY FOR THE PAST THIRTY YEARS AND IS NOW ALMOST AS DEAD AS THE LEGENDARY DODO BIRD IN THIS AREA?**

I'm not concerned with whose fault it is. There's enough fault to go around so that each of us can have a share of it. My concern is: What do we do now?

Here is my reasoning and my answer.

You've got to realize first that the leather business needs replacing. Peabody vitally needs industry to replace the jobs that we have lost in the leather business. You may be here many years and you may be here few years, but you've got to realize that the economic well-being of many of our citizens, the economic well-being of our City, depends upon new jobs. You may not want industry in Ward 1 or Ward 5 or Ward 6 or Ward 7, and I have no quarrel with you. But, remember, there are other places and other wards in the City — places where industry once provided jobs and where industry was once welcome and will be again.

Our City must walk on two feet. We must have places for homes and we must have places for business and industry; we need both the bedrooms and the workshops. It is good and fine for us to have the bedrooms in Wards 1, 5, 6 and 7, and it is good and

fine for us to have business and industry in Wards 2, 3, and 4. I come from Ward 4. It is not good to walk along the streets where the factories once provided work and where the machines no longer make the noise which meant that a man could take home a weekly paycheck. There are people living in my ward and in other wards who once worked in those factories, people who would not complain if the factory space was occupied again. You must not quarrel with them either. It is a common problem for the members of the community family. We need each other.

We have been very fortunate to this point. But very soon the enormous additions to our assessed valuations from residential construction must taper off and stop, because there is little land remaining for such use. If we continue to lose valuation because of the departure of our industry, the result could be disastrous. We have been able to take the losses in stride because residential valuation has filled the gap. Soon, very soon, new business and new industry will have to take up the slack.

"Yes," you say to me, "your reasoning is good, but what do we do?"

I'll try to make my answer equally good.

HERE'S WHAT WE DO

We make available without delay the land which should be made available for industrial use. We do not hold up the rezoning of the shopping center land for two years. We do not wait five years to rezone the land on the Newburyport Turnpike. We do not wait for prospective industries to come to knock on our doors; we seek them out.

We do not look to see who gets the credit. We want the result and let the credit go where it deserves to go. We work and make mistakes and we correct them. We let the envy pass and we build the City.

We organize as a community — not as individual service organizations, not as supporters of particular candidates for public office, not as participants for past mayors or candidates — but all of us as citizens of a good and growing City. We do not allow drift and indecision to set in. (If it has, each of us is partly to blame.) We move. We work. Each of us becomes a salesman for the community.

I think I can help to make a good policy of attracting new industry. I think I can breathe some fresh life into the search. If you think I can, vote for me. If you think I can't, vote for the fellow who can. If you vote for me, I won't wait until the day of inauguration to get started. I'll do it the day after the election.

2. WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT THE J. B. THOMAS HOSPITAL?

Do we have to do something about it? I want to make it clear. The answer is a very agonizing affirmative.

For almost thirty years it has been necessary to do something about it. But the only ones who have done anything have been the politicians and the personally interested. The citizens have done something: they have paid the bills.

With each new flare-up of interest, something has been done. A trustee has been defeated. A new trustee has been appointed. The law has been changed with reference to appointments. A superintendent has resigned; another hired. And with each change, interest has died until the next trouble is encountered. For almost thirty years this has been true. Before my time, in my time, and perhaps into the future.

I must ask you to notice particularly that the most recent change in the law and the resulting appointment of eleven new trustees to add to the four old trustees have apparently done little good. The reason is not hard to find. In my opinion, this will continue so

long as the politically ambitious and the politically selfish are permitted to participate in the management of the affairs of the hospital. So long as the hospital is a pawn for politicians, a source of power, a source of jobs, a source of business, — so long will it continue to present a terrible moral and economic problem of our City.

The hospital should be one of the bright symbols of our community progress. In Peabody it is the symbol of our political bankruptcy. The management of the hospital should be a model of municipal efficiency. In Peabody it is a model of ineptitude.

What do we do? What do we try to do?

My suggestion (I dare not label it an answer after thirty years of trial and error) is that you and I and the other citizens of the City consider the separation — once and for all — of the hospital from the municipal government. Let us consider making it a community hospital. Let us support it — not as voters — but as members of a family, all of us who live here. Not as taxpayers — but as human beings who still feel that the sick and ailing are deserving of our help and our charity.

I want to make my point clear. I would not want to divest the hospital of a reasonable municipal subsidy. I would want to divest the hospital of the last vestige of municipal and political control.

Let us consider turning what is left of the hospital over to men who have no political axes to grind. And then let us support them as members of the community.

Let us think about it. It has been done in other communities. Let us reconsider whether the municipal government belongs in the business.

Let us think about it while our hospital deficit does not exceed one hundred thousand dollars. Let us think about it before the deficit climbs to two hundred thousand dollars.

We've tried many things and many changes. Do you think what I have said might be a solution? Should we think about it? Or should we let it drift as it has for the last thirty years? I'll leave it to you.

3. WHAT DO WE DO TO IMPROVE OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM?

You realize, I know, that about 45 cents of every tax dollar you pay goes to the support and maintenance of our school system. To confirm the fact you need only to look at your tax bill. Make the computation yourself.

I mention this only to get you to adjust your thinking to the importance of the department. This is no small bite out of your tax dollar. It's worth thinking long and hard and right about it.

I like to think of the school system in two parts. There is the school housing and the school instruction. These are simple words for the physical plant and the mental plant. You can call the parts anything you wish. But, to me the words mean **where do our children stay when they go to school and what do they get out of being there.**

When we make this distinction in two parts, we are bound to get a clearer picture of what our problem is.

Only an unreasonable partisan or one accustomed to the luxury of the plush school buildings of very wealthy towns can have any objection to the condition of our school buildings. There is hardly a city around us that can compare its physical school plant with ours. The old buildings have been renovated and the new buildings have been maintained. When the Farnsworth and the Keefe schools are rehabilitated under the present contracts, every one of the school buildings will be in good shape.

We shall need another high school. It seems to me that it ought logically to be placed in West Peabody. With our assessed valuation almost doubled in the past several years, we can afford to build it. What is the big problem? It seems logical to me, too, that we ought to consider seriously the taking of the West Peabody speedway property for the purpose of a municipal stadium and athletic field. The double purpose served by such a taking is obvious. The race track would be eliminated and in its place we would have facilities to serve the 10,000 people who will be living in West Peabody before 1965. From my observation and study I anticipate that we shall have almost five million dollars of new valuation added to our tax rolls on January 1, 1962. If we stop the waste, we can afford the improvements.

Looking at it coldly, that's not the problem, is it? It's not the buildings you and I should be primarily concerned with, is it? The quality of the instruction our children get is the thing. And next to that we should be interested in what we pay for what our children get.

It's a despicable thing to play politics with our school system. I shudder to think of the effect on our children. I've said that I think of the school system in two parts. Some of the politicians don't think about it at all. Some think about what it can do for them. Others think about what it can do for their supporters. Hardly a thought is given to the fact that the school system represents the cornerstone of our democracy.

What would I do?

I'll fight for qualifications and competence in our school teachers. I'll never trade the vote of the Mayor for personal or political advantage. I'll never surrender the opportunity to be of service to our children. My record in the city council bears witness to what I pledge. Politics does not belong in the school department any more than it belongs at the J. B. Thomas Hospital.

I'm not worried about the other six votes in the school committee. I have confidence that the moral conscience of all six can be aroused by one vote willing to stand and fight for the right.

4. WHAT DO WE DO TO BRING ADEQUATE SEWER AND WATER FACILITIES TO ALL PARTS OF OUR CITY?

The easiest answer is to say that we extend the sewer and water facilities. It's not quite as easy as that. Hundreds of hours of planning and millions of dollars are involved.

These are two of the most important services the municipality can render to its residents. The health and well-being of every inhabitant is closely related to how well those services are performed.

The water facilities have been extended. The job is a continuing one. The water supply requires a close surveillance. The growth of our population has made strict attention a necessity. It is only because our leather factories have disappeared that we now have a favorable balance in the water supply. If the factories were to operate again and if their operations required the use of water in the quantity formerly used by the leather industry, we would find ourselves in a precarious position. For that reason the search for additional water supply must go on constantly. I would continue the good work that has already been done.

As you know, the engineering study relative to the sewer system and its extension has been completed. It is only one step. Each facet of the proposed sewer plan requires immediate study and analysis so that we shall know how we are going to proceed, how long it will take, how we are going to finance the work, how much each homeowner will pay. This has not been done.

Are you interested? You ought to be if your home is not now connected to the municipal sewer system. You're going to need that sewer connection if you don't already need it. You're going to have to pay your share. By the way, you're paying now, but you don't seem to know it. Or do you? The City collected a little more than \$50,000. for sewer charges last year and we paid more than \$125,000. for that department in the same period. This means that you and every other taxpayer made up the deficit for the people who have sewer connections. Are you interested now?

I'll tell you what I'll do about it the day after the election.

I'll appoint a knowledgeable group of private citizens to sit with each and every city official involved in such an immense project and I'll have a complete report from them for you within the shortest possible time. If they need a professional consultant and if we haven't such a person, I'll hire the help. I'll have a report on every facet and we'll know where we're going and what it will take, and how we're going to get there. If you think more can be done in this regard, I'll listen and adopt the good.

5. WHAT DO WE DO TO IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATION OF OUR MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT?

We are now almost 35,000 citizens and residents of the City of Peabody. We are not the 20,000 inhabitants of a decade ago. There has been a tremendous change in our community. We have grown in numbers. We have grown in community wealth. But we have not grown in the contemporary methods of municipal administration. We have given lip service — not active service — to the fact of our growth.

We are operating a good and growing city and we are doing it with a worn out adding machine and an equally worn out typewriter. If you can walk into the city hall or the city hall annex and get any other impression, then you're being just plain charitable.

The individual city departments are years behind the times. The quarters, the machinery and equipment, and the methods are of a vintage of 1900; they simply do not lend themselves to the requirements of a large and growing population in the year 1961. The civil servants are handicapped by the combination of antiquated methods and machinery. Their talent for service is bounded by their surroundings.

The absolutely necessary coordination between municipal departments is at times almost non-existent. In such circumstances the services to which the citizens are entitled must suffer. The enforcement of our zoning and building regulations is an outstanding example. I would provide a fulltime planning director and a fulltime engineer to see to it that there is a strict enforcement of each and every obligation on the part of builders and developers.

The rut is deep and the machine runs only because it is in gear. Breakdown is unlikely but so is improvement. It will take a major effort to lift the municipal service out of the old and deep rut.

I'll make that major effort.

Whether or not I can bring it to pass in a year or two is foolhardy to promise. But I will start the process. With good planning, with sincere effort and with community co-operation there is not the slightest reason why we cannot have a new municipal building to house all of the municipal departments. There is no reason, including that of cost, why we must continue to labor in surroundings which are neither of service nor of credit to us. We cannot afford to continue the present waste.

It is difficult to change things. But the change must take place. Departments have continued in the ways and methods adopted by the township. Frequently and unfortunately the staffing has been on the basis of political expediency. There has been small regard for necessary qualifications. The Community suffers little when menial tasks are placed in the hands of political followers, but the damage is great when important administrative positions are considered plums for politicians.

I know and recognize the hazards and pitfalls to my political fortunes when I speak as I do. But, I must make it clear that I do not intend to sacrifice either my principles or your interests for the purpose of a meaningless victory.

I'll make the effort to recreate the municipal government and its administration in the image intended by all responsible citizens. If I did any less, I would not be true to myself or the people who are working sincerely for my success.

If you believe, as I do, that we can succeed in such an effort, then give me your help. Let those who despair of improvement, of progress, of a good city getting better, — let them vote for another man.

DOES THIS STIMULATE YOUR THINKING?

Now, in conclusion, I wish that I had the time and the space to talk about the hundred and one other matters which trouble us all. I've given you my thoughts on five of the most important issues we confront as citizens. You have something definite on which to base your thinking about my adequacy as a candidate for the office of Mayor. If in some instances my approach is not of the orthodox variety, don't be alarmed. Think about it. When the usual methods fail, as they have, isn't it time to think fresh and new?

Before I finish my statement, I must bring to your attention a very painful commentary on this political campaign. I have been throughout the City and I have heard many comments. Some have been complimentary and some have been downright vicious. Some have made me smile and some have made me grit my teeth. All of this must be expected by a candidate for public office.

But I did not anticipate in the fall of 1961, after so wonderful a lesson in the democratic concept of good racial, religious, and ethnic relationship on a national basis in 1960, that I would be confronted with the repeated comment, "A Mavroules may be nominated, but he could never be elected." Heaven help me! I was too young to decide for myself that I ought not to have been born a Mavroules. If I had the decision, I would still be a Mavroules.

I do not want to labor the point. You are aware of it. You have heard it as I have, if you participate in this campaign.

I don't believe it. I don't believe what the comment implies.

I have asked you to take me on the basis of WHERE I STAND, WHAT I STAND FOR, WHAT I INTEND TO DO AS MAYOR — not WHO I AM. I ask no more.

I have said a great deal and I ask you to think about my answers and my reasoning. I must thank you for being so patient with me.

Very sincerely,

Nicholas Mavroules